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A Serious Manifesto and Declaration OF THE ANABAPTIST,

And other Congregational CHURCHES,

Touching the present Transactions of the Affairs of this Commonwealth, both in Church and State.

BRITISH MUSEUM

WIth what unwearied vigour and zeal of Spirit we have alwayes sought the promotion and advancement of the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Purity of the Gospel, and Liberty of Conscience, against all that have opposed themselves thereunto, some preceding years can bear us Testimony; which we endevoured to do, not onely by wading through streams of Blood and Danger in the late Wars, with the extremest hazard of all that was Dear and Near unto us; but also by a continuall and fervent intercession, by tears and prayers unto Almighty God on that behalf.

Nor need we here acquaint this present Age, with what success they were answered from Him who is the Giver of all good: the reall Testimonies whereof are pregnant enough, from that sweet and Christian Liberty we all enjoyed, as well in our Civil Imployments, as our Religious Dispensations; and might from thence long since have expected and looked for a sweet, lasting, and reall composure of Spirits and Interests in this Nation, Had not some (Ambitious of single Power of Regality in themselves, abetted and assisted by others of like base and degenerating spirits) spoiled the Fabrick of our Peace and Happiness, Levelling the Hope of our Settlement, to advance the height of his unjust and usurped Power and Kingship.

During the Reign of which Dragon, all knowing men can witness, how much the Churches of Christ then suffered, and all that bore Testimony to the Truth of the Lord Jesus, both by Silencings, Sequestrings, Imprisonments and Death, not regarding of what Faith or Profession, or whether Friends or Foes; but the (once) Bosom Friend, as well as the Common Enemy, were alike liable to his mercilesse Cruelty. But, his Violence was cut off with his Life, and his Progeny (from Ruling) by both.

We shall not (therefore) need to mention those few minutes of his Sons Reign, which lasted not much longer, than whilst he contracted vast Debts for his Fathers Funeral, but soon vanish'd, leaving the Commonwealth dearly to pay both for the Erecting, and for the Pulling Down again of their Kingly Idol: Nor of what was acted in each after-Interval and Change, Affairs of State being alwayes left and found in such counfusion and disorder, that the Churches of Christ were still in jeopardy, and could very hardly get one look of favour or Protection from successive Rulers: We having not (indeed) in all the Vicissitudes these late years have afforded, beheld any visible Rulers, on whom the Congregated Churches had more cause to fix a real hope of liberty and freedom on (as to Spirituals) than on that part of the Officers of the Army late residing in *Wallingford-House* (whom we do Resolve to adhere to, and stand by) whose zeal to the Cause of Christ and his Churches, as well as Conscience and Care of the Peoples Rights and Liberties, put them upon the Necessity of that kinde of Assembling and Acting: by whom, (had they not been so unworthily deserted and betrayed by some of their own Fellows and Servants) we might have seen ere this the greatest day of rejoycing and gladness amongst the Churches of Christ, that all or any of the foregoing Ages have either seen or read of.

Being therefore deeply sensible of our present sufferings, (by the loss of those our worthy Patriots, and Church-defenders) and of the real Causers thereof: And finding at this present (to our great grief, as well as admiration) That at this time the implacable Enemies of our Churches (the late Secluded Members) are again admitted, and do now daily Sit and Vote in Parliament; from whose violent tempers of Spirit (according to their former exprest fury) we are in all likelyhood to expect our common Peace to be perturbed, our Meetings dissolved, and our Persons endangered, if some timely and necessary provision for prevention thereof be not made and provided.

And we have yet further confidence to speak, That as we are not (if united) an inconsiderable part of this Nation, both in respect of Power, Estates and Strength: So we hope no sober and unbyassed persons can think it consistent with our Reason and Interest, to suffer a trampling upon by Forms of Banishment, Sequestrations, and unjust Proclamations for making some of us Traytors, who long since have learnt to *deny the Power of them.*

And therefore we do hereby Manifest and Declare, on the behalf of our selves, and all other Congregational Churches within this Commonwealth, holding the Faith of the Lord Jesus in Word and Doctrine, That we shall not submit to any Qualifications of Parliament in point of Faith and Religion, (a force, we hear, intended to be put upon our Consciences) other than shall consist with the true Teachings and Guidance of the holy Spirit. Nor shall we hold our selves obliged to render obedience to this present State-conjunction, without the full and free restitution and admission of the Lord *Lambert*, &c. lately Members of the *Committee of Safety*. And we do further Declare, That we shall with our Lives and Fortunes, and to our utmost Power and Abilities, Assist, Promote, Adhere to, and stand by those true and faithful Assertors of the Cause of Christ and his Churches: Looking upon all other Parties and Interests, but as such *who have kindled a fire, and compassed themselves about with sparks; that* may *walk in the light of their fire, and in the sparks that they have kindled: But this shall they have at the hand of the Lord, They shall lie down in Sorrow.*

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